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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate effective applications of portfolios based on research literature and practice in two distinct teacher education programs. During the study it quickly became apparent that the metaphors used to describe portfolios help elucidate how the profession perceives their appropriate use. In fact, the term "portfolio" is a metaphor educators have borrowed from artists. In some cases, the portfolio becomes a metaphor for statistical references. A second metaphor is the portfolio as tool, and another is the portfolio as conversation. At one school of education, portfolio use was well-established, and descriptions of portfolio use were very complete. At the second site, there was a strong focus on affective factors in learning, and there was considerable uncertainty about the direction state requirements for accreditation would take. In many ways, at both schools, the portfolio became the context for learning how to interact professionally. Conceptualizing the portfolio as tool and as conversation were the metaphors most commonly found at both schools. The challenge for teacher preparation programs is to find ways of implementing the portfolio in ways that promote professional growth and program enhancement while maintaining conversations that are succinct and scintillating. (Contains 35 references.) (SLD)

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Portfolios: Metaphor Upon Metaphor

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Portfolios: Metaphor Upon Metaphor

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The portfolio is becoming a popular means of assessing teacher performance, especially in school-based teacher preparation programs. Studies of portfolios, however, raise questions about their appropriateness on some occasions. The objective of this study was to investigate effective applications of portfolios based on research literature and practice in two distinct teacher education programs.

During the study, it quickly became apparent that the metaphors that authors used to describe portfolios help elucidate how the profession perceives their appropriate use. In fact, the term "portfolio" is itself a metaphor that educators have borrowed from artists. Teachers cannot document their work literally as visual artists do. To help answer the question about effective applications of portfolios, perhaps the metaphors used to describe the portfolio metaphor can provide insights that enhance research studies of this new practice.

This paper will briefly review the metaphors that educational researchers used or implied in describing the use of portfolios as documentation of performance assessments of preservice teachers. It will then describe two very different teacher education programs in light of the metaphor that best seems to characterize how teacher educators are employing portfolios.

DATA SOURCES

To obtain research literature that would be easily accessible to teacher educators, I conducted two ERIC searches using an on-line FirstSearch Database. An advanced search with Assessment as the major descriptor (keyword), Preservice as the minor descriptor (keyword), and no other limits generated 151 records, ranging from 1965 to 1998. A

second search that substituted Portfolios as the major keyword descriptor generated 59 records from 1993 to 1998. As expected, there was considerable overlap in the two lists.

The two sites that provided evidence from practice represent extremes in teacher education programs. Site A is in a public university that admitted about 450 new teacher education students per year in a state with very prescriptive requirements for teacher certification. Site A is a Carnegie Research II university with several graduate programs, including doctoral programs in several areas of education. Site A has been NCATE approved for most of its history, and many of its administrators have played important roles on NCATE teams. Site B, on the other hand, is at an independent liberal arts university that admits about 55 new teacher education students per year. Site B is classified as Carnegie Comprehensive, and there are masters and educational specialist degrees in the School of Education. The state certification requirements for Site B are in transition from a traditional input model to one requiring outcomes based on modifications of the NCATE standards. Site B has resisted NCATE historically but is considering applying for accreditation since the state is moving toward a single accreditation model.

Both sites are similar only in that they have a history of innovation in teacher education that brought them national recognition in the past. Adjunct and/or clinical faculty or teaching assistants make up a large portion of the teaching staff at both sites. Also, both programs serve urban areas and claim to be committed to preparing preservice teachers for diverse, urban teaching assignments.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The portfolio is designed to be a means of exhibiting a student's learning over time to make a broad-based, authentic evaluation from a variety of data sources and methods for data collection. It should contain longitudinal evidence that conveys a sense of the student's efforts to improve. As such, a portfolio reflects development rather than a summative evaluation (Touzel, 1993).

Portfolio assessment differs from traditional forms of assessment in that "new performance assessments are intended to function as integral elements within the education system, rather than as external monitors of the system" (Resnick, 1996, p. 2). The standards that guide portfolio development set clear targets for instruction and learning. Traditional tests, on the other hand, are designed to monitor the system and predict indirectly how well a student or institution is performing.

Resnick (1996) noted that alternative assessments also reflect assumptions about knowledge and competence that are based on theories of situated cognition. Traditional testing, on the other hand, is rooted in assumptions of associationism. Associationists believe that knowledge and skill can be characterized in terms of separate bits of mental associations. Competence, then, is a function of this internally represented knowledge. In situated cognition the state of the learner's preparedness interacts with the tools, people, and context to produce performance.

As teacher preparation programs move to authentic school and community sites, it is imperative that preservice teacher assessment also become more authentic. The portfolio has become the preferred means for providing authentic assessment.

FINDINGS

\Metaphors in Recent Literature

One of the metaphors to emerge from the generated bibliography consists of statistical terms generally associated with research literature, such as reliabiiity and validity. This metaphor is congruent with the normal justification for portfolios: assessment. Fahey and Fingon (1997), for example, describe methods for ensuring interobserver reliability. Nweke and Noland (1996) correlated grades in courses with those on portfolios. Krause (1996) compared two groups of students' understanding of the portfolio process, varying the treatment in each group. Naizer (1997) studied the reliability and validity of the portfolio process by assessing students' domain-strategic and general-learning strategic knowledge.

Some might argue that these statistical references are themes, designs, or procedures rather than metaphors. However, the requisite assumptions for statistical analyses (Pedhazer, 1997) are generally lacking from studies based on portfolio grades. Metaphors are rhetorical devices to transmit the meaning of one word or phrase through another by evoking a mental comparison. As such, it seems more accurate to portray these studies as attempts to convey to portfolios the status that standardized tests currently hold rather than as statistical studies. There are, of course, statistical studies on the reliability and validity of portfolios that do meet the assumptions necessary for making high-stakes decisions (e.g., Myford & Mislevy, 1995; Resnick, 1996). However, given the normal uses of portfolios in teacher education, such statistical rigor is not required and may even divert attention from the important quality factors that portfolios bring to teacher preparation.

A second metaphor found in these papers was the portfolio as tool. Such a metaphor is congruent with the perspective that portfolios provide appropriate assessments for programs based on situated cognition because the theme of tools frequently appears in the literature on situated cognition (e.g., Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1990). Also, in their review of 24 teacher education programs, Anderson and DeMeulle (1998) found that assessment by portfolio reflected a constructivist model of teacher preparation. In the articles under review here the portfolio was described as a tool for reflection (Borko, Michalec, Timmons, & Siddle, 1997; Copenhaver, Waggoner, Young, & James, 1997; Holt, *et al.*, 1997; Lyons, 1998); inquiry (Grant & Huebner, 1998; Snyder, Lippincott, & Bower, 1998); and professional development (Freidus, 1996; Wolf & Dietz, 1998).

The metaphor of portfolio as tool provides important information for teacher educators. It focuses the worker on the appropriate application of the tool. In fact, Snyder, Lippincott, and Bower (1998) warned that the portfolio might be a tool that is used for too many or even competing uses. For example, they found that using portfolios for

inquiry into personal practice during preservice teacher professional development and as a means of evaluation may result in a troublesome tension.

Portfolio as conversation was cited by Bartell, Kaye, and Morin (1998). They claimed that conversations about portfolio entries offer inservice teachers the best opportunity to grow, learn, and enhance teaching expertise. Interestingly, these authors used the metaphor of a journey in the title of their article whereas the paper itself describes the conversations around the portfolios. Wolf, et al. (1995) also describe portfolios as conversations. Their use of conversation, however, should not be characterized as such because the authors prescribe how to conduct the sessions "properly," thereby contradicting the notion of a free exchange of ideas that is implied in a conversation.

Even studies that did not use the metaphor of conversation describe activities that may be characterized as such. For example, Cole and Ryan (1998) and Freidus (1996) discussed how the concepts related to the portfolio are communicated through courses, mentoring, and authentic experiences. Berry, et al. (1991) noted the dialog between students and faculty that occured as students communicated their growth and faculty responded to students' comments and needs. Loughran and Corrigan (1995) found that only when students had the notion of audience (i.e., prospective employer) did they understand the value of the portfolio. Putting the task in a communicative context helped teacher educators convey the meaning of the portfolio to their students.

Other metaphors that the authors themselves used included the portfolio as marketing strategy (Weinberger & Didham, 1987) and window (Touzel, 1993). These seemed appropriate to the discussions in each paper but were not found in other sources

The metaphor of the portfolio as conversation emerged as the most potent for describing practices at the two sites in question. In the scholarly literature, the conversation appears from the time that students are taught how to prepare the portfolio until they receive feedback that they have achieved the final outcomes. The conversation occurs in writing and orally, between faculty and students, among faculty and students as peer groups, and

as inner speech rehearsal by an individual student. The conversation may be initiated by the state or national accrediting or governance body, faculty, or raters. The metaphor of the conversation in the following program descriptions should elucidate when the conversation is effective and when or if there is a breakdown in communication.

Program Descriptions

Site A had been developing school and community-based teacher education for seven years. They had several documents, including electronic information, describing their program and assessment expectations. Their program descriptions, for example, cited scholars in situated cognition and neo-Vygotskian pedagogy (Brown, Collins, & Duguid,1989; Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore,1988) and claimed that the program relied on authentic tasks that minimize any inert knowledge, i.e., declarative knowledge that is not anchored to a personally and socially relevant activity. Their stated goal was for their graduates have to have a sense of empowerment developed through meaningful professional experiences.

Descriptions of their use of portfolios were also very complete at Site A. They claimed that portfolios require students to assemble evidence of milestones they have reached. This allows students from diverse backgrounds to use their own "voices" and products to make the case for their learning. They guided students to use a "value-added" principle in assembling evidences. That is, students were not to add evidence that did not increase the value of their portfolio. This prevented interns from thinking that a bigger portfolio is better.

Site A also relied on research to guide the application of portfolio information. The program subscribed to Nweke's (1991) findings that portfolios supplement rather than substitute for traditional testing procedures. Traditional examinations in campus-based core courses and the state-required certification examinations continued, but courses with significant experiences in schools were assessed with a portfolio.

At Site A portfolios were introduced during the application procedure. Students who wanted to enter the program had to assemble evidence that they were ready for the professional development phase of their preparation program before being allowed to enter the first foundations course. The criteria were similar to those in the traditional program: grades, lower division courses completed, and state-required courses. However, the directions related these requirements to the expectation that teachers are academic role models. New criteria were also added. Because students were going into the schools earlier, the faculty wanted to assure that the preservice teachers had a professional attitude. They asked them to supply evidence that they had experience a) working with young people; b) interacting with those with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; and c) reflecting on teaching as a career. Applicants also had to provide letters of reference with phone numbers for raters to verify the information provided. One letter was required from a faculty member who had agreed to mentor the applicant.

After entering the program at Site A, the next portfolio was completed and demonstrated after students had observed teachers, taught lessons to small groups, and served as teachers' aides in a Professional Development School (PDS). Faculty, teachers, and students discussed ways in which the preservice teachers could document that they were ready to student teach. Interns often included products they developed as they solved the problems posed by university faculty. Candidates prepared their portfolio presentations much as graduate students prepare theses defenses. Each student assembled a committee of university and school faculty to hear the evidence that the candidates had met the objectives.

The final portfolio was presented when the student teachers believed they had completed student teaching. At this time, candidates had to demonstrate that they were "safe to start" teaching. The same committee again assembled, listened to the presentation, asked questions, and made recommendations based on the final portfolio.

During the last semester, faculty also invited principals and personnel directors to present their views on evidence that they would like to see at job interviews. Candidates

began to discuss among themselves and with school and university faculty which items in their portfolios that they could extract to include in a professional interview portfolio.

The practices at Site A reflected its long history of a team approach to teacher preparation. The Associate Dean for Teacher Education negotiated roles with faculty and their department chairs and assigned teaching assistants to meet prescriptive state requirements. Faculty designed group review processes for providing feedback on the portfolios to minimize the time that they spent on each portfolio. The Associate Dean also secured external funding to reward faculty with technology and research assistants and facilitated the research necessary for faculty to meet their own career goals. For some faculty participants, the portfolio provided data for that research, including studies of concept maps (cf. Shavelson, Lang, & Lewin, 1994).

Written program descriptions did not vary greatly philosophically at Site B. Site B's mission statement and program goals focused on teaching critical thinking, practical application of theoretical understanding, and risk-taking in learning. The conceptual framework of the program cited "research literature that supports the efficacy of interactive, constructivist learning in authentic environments, as defined in the Mission Statement and Goals." It included studies of situated cognition, "which support the practices endorsed by scholars who promote the teaching of higher order thinking through exploratory, authentic learning." This document claimed, "experiences are evaluated using authentic assessments, including portfolio entries."

One major difference between the two sites was Site B's focus on affective factors in learning. An accreditation document stated, "Faculty in the School of Education endeavor to provide guidance and model the affect and strategies necessary to support students' sense of efficacy. Both the undergraduate and the MAT program offer several options through which students can take charge of their own learning. Faculty are committed to supporting students, and they are reviewed--and rewarded--for advising and teaching."

However, in spite of having a well-defined philosophy, the program was not as well developed as at Site A. The state department of education had recently notified teacher preparation programs that they were changing accreditation requirements, even before securing approval from the state board of education. In fact, the state board delayed adopting the new standards, thereby postponing the transition.

The effects of the change appeared both positive and negative. Faculty at Site B had spent long hours developing program goals for both undergraduate and graduate programs and had just begun discussions of how the goals would be assessed. When the state adapted the NCATE standards, there was not an exact correspondence between Site B's goals and the state's standards. One faculty member volunteered to study where there was agreement between the two documents. She found that Site B's goals met or exceeded all of the standards with one exception; assessment was embedded in the extant goals and needed to be highlighted under the state standards. The professor stated that meeting this requirement should strengthen the program.

The transition required new documentation and further faculty discussion. Student handbooks had to be revised to reflect the new standards. For example, originally guides for preparing portfolios instructed students to organize their portfolios around Site B's goals. When the state department established its standards, faculty considered ways to modify the existing requirements. For example, a faculty member who incorporated portfolios in her course expressed some concern about abandoning Site B's goals since they contained all of the elements of the standards. The program director, however, suggested that formatting the portfolio around the standards would communicate better to state department staff how each student had met the standard. Because faculty at Site B claimed to have a history of resisting external oversight, the organizing structure of the portfolio consumed much greater attention than it did at Site A. Meanwhile, the director of field services prepared new student handbooks to reflect the standards, knowing she would need to revise them again when the program itself was better aligned to the standards.

At the time of the study Site B had only two years' experience with portfolio assessment of preservice teachers. They first piloted portfolios among student teachers. One faculty member took responsibility for attending informational meetings held by the state department, conducting portfolio workshops for students, and reading all the student teachers' portfolios. She then met individually with each student and provided oral feedback. Later a faculty member for the initial professional course incorporated portfolios at the one professional development school (PDS) site and in her campus-based course. She secured external funding to pay researchers to compare the portfolios from the two settings.

The independence of the faculty at Site B is strikingly stronger than at the larger Site A. There was no structure in place to facilitate faculty teamwork in development activities. In discussions about the portfolio requirement, some faculty members resisted very vocally, citing the time commitment. They said that they valued personal relationships with students, and this was documented by the number of hours each faculty member met with individual advisees. However, only a few faculty members viewed the portfolio as a means of relating to their students.

DISCUSSION

To understand the metaphor of conversation, it helps to review classic linguistic studies. Linguists frequently describe conversations in terms of social interchange or speech acts. Pike (1982), for example, noted that language is action, a kind of behavior. "When people talk to other people, they may wish to influcence them to act differently to believe differently, or to interrelate with them in some social way. If language did not affect behavior, it couldhave no meaning" (p. 15). Similarly, Portine (1978) defined discourse as a mode of intervention on others. These definitions call to mind Resnick's (1996) assertion that performance assessment consists of "a set of procedures designed to serve certain social and institutional functions" (p. 3).

To Pike (1982), the context provides meaning as much as the words themselves. All languages appear to have roughly the same set of illocutionary acts and strategies for performing those acts. They differ significantly in terms of when a certain illocutionary act should be performed and with what strategy (Fraser, 1979). Children in all cultures appear to learn these strategies as they learn to talk. Garvey (1975) found that by 5.5 years of age children had learned the complexities of conversational structure, namely getting attention, taking turns, making relevant utterances, nominating and acknowledging topics, ignoring and avoiding topics, priming topics, and requesting clarification. In a later study Garvey (1977) demonstrated that learning to talk is in fact learning how to interact.

Applying these principles to portfolios, it becomes clearer why teacher education students ask questions and incorporate materials into their portfolios as they do. Teacher education students attempt to find ways to get the portfolio raters' attention. They attempt to learn what they can say to whom and when they can say it. They aspire to make relevant utterances. They nominate their own topics and acknowledge the topics that raters require in the portfolio, and they ignore or avoid those topics that confuse or annoy them. As they learn, they become more proficient in carrying on a conversation that accurately communicates their personal and professional growth.

In many ways, the portfolio becomes the context for learning how to interact professionally. Many of the papers that used the metaphor of the portfolio as tool gave evidence that the portfolios provided such a context. As in conversations, portfolio assessment often begins as an answer to a question or priming topic. In Site A three questions guided students as they developed professionally: Why do you want to be a teacher? What evidence do you have that you are ready to student teach? and What evidence do you have that you are safe to start teaching? In a validation study, a testing agency required portfolio test-takers to answer three questions over the term of a course (Myford & Mislevy, 1995).

After the topics are nominated, interlocutors need appropriate information to be able to continue the conversation. At Sites A and B and in program descriptions in the literature, effective portfolios were used in conjunction with authentic experiences that provided a context for professional social interaction. Students had experiences they could relate and evidence for professional development that they could incorporate to maintain the portfolio/conversation after the topics were initiated.

Novice portfolio writers, like new language learners, understand that their communicative task is extremely complex. One of the acquisition strategies of language learners is simplification (S), in which the learner attempts to make the enormous task more manageable. A simplification strategy of some students in Sites A and B was to follow a guide strictly, not personalizing the portfolio in any way. A similar strategy was to write no or minimal information about each entry. A more effective strategy was to rely on feedback from those with greater knowledge: peers, faculty, mentoring teachers. Just as language learners' skills develop with more attempts to communicate, portfolio writers become more proficient with each entry and feedback. One student at Site A remarked how she had begun her portfolio by following all the rules. However, by the time she presented her portfolio to the committee, it truly reflected her own values. To the observer, it seemed that she had found her professional voice.

To be able to maintain a conversation, the complexity of discourse requires that both interlocutors use strategies appropriate to the context. Faculty, raters, state agencies, and others involved in the portfolio/conversation should be aware of the rules of discourse for portfolio/conversations. For example, one graduate of Site A complained to the researcher that in her graduate program at a Research I university, one of her professors asked students to put together a portfolio for a doctoral course in five days. The professor clearly was ignorant of the rules of discourse that teacher educators have established for portfolios. Similarly, the findings by Snyder, Lippincott, and Bower, D. (1998) suggest that competing uses of portfolios contradicts those same rules of discourse.

The complexity of the portfolio/conversation is apparent on other levels as well. As was clear in the evidence from the two sites, conversations are occuring on many levels at once. Unlike television sitcoms, where only one conversation is available at a time, portfolios are conversations in the foreground, background, behind the scenes, and in flashbacks. For example, in the context of state agencies, portfolios might be intended to communicate to the public that the state is making teacher preparation programs accountable for certifying quality teachers. In Site B flashbacks to conversations about external oversight provided a context that the program director had to consider as she attempted to initiate the portfolio/conversation among the faculty. Students at both sites carried on peer conversations behind the scenes that both supported and interfered with the portfolio/conversation.

Since effective strategies for maintaining a conversation vary according to the context, linguists study these strategies by distinguishing the types of social interaction. Perhaps their distinctions can enhance teacher educators' understanding about refining the portfolio/conversation. For instance, not all social interaction is conversation, according to Pike. Lectures, for example, consist of continuous speech with theme development. A classic work defining conversation was written by Joos (19). He clarified that conversations may be classified according to the amount of contextualization or shared knowledge and the amount of feedback. On either end of Joos's taxonomy are the Intimate and Formal levels. Intimate conversations assume a great deal of mutually known background information while the Formal level requires no shared prior understanding and allows no feedback. Joos also adds a Frozen level beyond the Formal. This is the level of poetry or letters that, once published or sent, cannot be changed.

Generally, portfolio/conversations are at Joos's mid-level, Consultative. At that level one interlocutor has information that the other does not have. The knower must convey information to the listener/reader with sufficient detail so that, at the end of the conversation, both have similar understandings of the material that was shared. The

knower also looks for feedback to be able to change the conversation if the listener does not appear to understand or agree.

To be effective, portfolio/conversations have to provide significant exchange of ideas to meet the Consultative requirements: the knower must provide detail yet check for understanding and adjust the information for the listener/reader. Readers in Myford and Mislevy's (1995) study noted that "students should strive for clarity, coherence, and consistency" (p. 35) when writing their portfolios. Those readers even preferred a thesis statement and a short explanation that made clearly evident the idea behind the sample of work.

Some examples of effective portfolios are found in studies that described how preservice teachers communicated their development. Some students documented inquiry or reflection and the consequent changes in their own or their students' behavior (Borko, Michalec, Timmons, & Siddle, 1997; Copenhaver, Waggoner, Young, & James, 1997; Grant & Huebner, 1998; Holt, *et al.*, 1997; Snyder, Lippincott, & Bower, 1998). In her study of reflection in portfolios, Lyons (1998) was also able to demonstrate the developmental nature of reflection, thereby extending the conversation to teacher educators concerned with teaching how to reflect.

Faculty who coach students to provide evidence through a portfolio should also model the Consultative level. That is, faculty should provide information while simultaneously adjusting the information according to student feedback. Instead, there is evidence that faculty often resort to the Formal level of communication, where the knower provides information without seeking feedback from the listener. Many programs appear to provide portfolio guidelines, checklists, and requirements instead of a real conversation. For example, portfolios provide an ideal opportunity for reflection, but Lyons (1998) found that student teachers in her study received little instruction on how to reflect. Describing a context more in line with the Consultative conversation, Freidus (1998) explained how detailed published guidelines were used in conjunction with on-going

meetings between faculty mentors and students and among students for peer mentoring. Both Sites A and B had introductory workshops, opportunities for peer mentoring, and faculty mentors to clarify and support the portfolio/conversation.

The portfolio evaluation process provides another means of feedback to the knower. Yet readers face several challenges (Myford & Mislevy, 1995). They may empathize too much, compare one student's portfolio with another, not have all the contextual background, fail to use all points on the rating scale, lack experience in an area that a student develops or, conversely, be an expert in that area--all of which derive from the difficulties of rating a conversation.

Myford and Mislevy (1995) attempted to resolve these issues by engaging raters in conversations. They described how the conversations contributed to the validity of the scoring process, "The discussion process helps the reader to see the work through another reader's eyes and to bring the readers back to focus on the substance of the portfolio" (p. 33). The researchers' instructions to the raters also couched the rating process in conversational terms, "The best way to develop the meaning of rating scale values is through discussions and examples, to promote among judges a shared view of what to look at and what is important, and a common language for their evaluation" (p. 82).

Just as questions may prime the portfolio developers, the assessment of the portfolio may be couched in terms of questions that have been converted to a scoring system. For instance, Myford and Mislevy (1995) asked raters to focus on three questions then provided a rubric that allowed a score of one to four to rate the qualities of the answers to each question. During the study, the raters requested that the rubric provide many more examples, specify the number of items required, and describe how to score problematic artifacts. In short, the readers wanted more explanation about the intentions of the researchers. In this study of portfolio assessment, the investigators posed the questions but the feedback from the raters continued the conversation that led to an enhanced scoring system.

The goal of portfolio assessment is not eliminating all variation and discrepancies, however. "An ideal system would exhibit some degree of informed disagreement among experienced readers *within a common framework of meaning*. Our concern lies with disagreements caused by lack of understanding of the task or amiguities about standards of evidence" (Myford & Mislevy 1995, p. 47). As Simmons (1996) made clear, faculty should not control the contents of a portfolio, just the purpose. Preservice teachers must have the latitude to express their professional growth in their own terms. The conversation will probably be stilted at first but will grow with the students' professional growth.

CONCLUSION

Conversational themes appear in most descriptions of effective portfolio implementation. The conversation metaphor also helps explain the difference between the new performance assessments and traditional tests. While portfolio assessment provides a system for direct communication between the interlocutors, traditional tests are frequently gossip. They are indirect and used to make inferences, generally about others.

According to Resnick (1996) accepting the student's evidence is not sufficient. She suggests that, in addition to documented evidence, performance assessment requires a certification of accomplishments by expert judges. This judgment may be similar to the judgments of veracity in a conversation or letters of introduction.

The challenge for teacher preparation programs is to find ways of implementing the portfolio in ways that promote professional growth and program enhancement while maintaining conversations that are succinct and scintillating.

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